

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3340

EXDIS, FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, LE, IS
SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS - JUNE 16, 1978 -
SOUTH LEBANON

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS AT NOON JUNE 16 (I HOPED TO SEE HIM PREVIOUS DAY BUT HE HAD SPENT ALL MORNING PAYING CONDOLENCE CALL ON PRESIDENT FRANGIEH IN NORTH LEBANON AND ASKED THAT I CALL TODAY.) BOUTROS SAID HE HAD JUST HEARD REPORT THAT MAJOR HADDAD HAD BEEN KILLED BUT THAT LEBANESE ARMY G-2 DID NOT REPEAT NOT THINK IT WAS TRUE. THERE WAS ALSO REPORT THAT HADDAD HAD BEEN ARRESTED BY HIS OWN SOLDIERS. BOUTROS REMARKED WRYLY THAT IF THIS WERE TRUE IT MIGHT SOLVE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IN SOUTH LEBANON.

2. REVIEWING EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS IN THE SOUTH, BOUTROS REPEATED THE ORDERS WHICH HAD BEEN SENT TO MAJOR HADDAD (TEXT AS GIVEN PARA 4 OF JERUSALEM 1617 - NOTAL - CONFIDENTIAL

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APPEARS FROM BOUTROS' DESCRIPTION TO BE ACCURATE), AND THAT HADDAD HAD REPLIED, AGREEING TO OBEY. HOWEVER, HADDAD HAD NOT DONE SO BECAUSE OF ISRAELI INTERFERENCE. BOUTROS WAS CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL IS DELIBERATELY PUSHING HADDAD, AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS, TO CREAT TROUBLE FOR UNIFIL. BOUTROS WAS UPSET BY STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN'S ALLEGED USE OF WORD "LEGAL" TO DESCRIBE HADDAD'S POSITION IN THE SOUTH AND

REPEATED IN STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS THAT, ALTHOUGH HADDAD WAS DE FACTO COMMANDER OF CERTAIN LEBANESE TROOPS IN THE SOUTH, HE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE ANYTHING WITH ANYBODY AND HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT REPRESENT THE GOL. THE ONLY THING HE HAD THE AUTHORITY TO DO WAS TO WITHDRAW INTO HIS BARRACKS AS HE HAD BEEN ORDERED TO DO BY THE LEBANESE ARMY COMMAND. BOUTROS URGED THAT WE ALL AVOID THE USE OF WORDS LIKE "LEGAL" AND CONCENTRATE ON TRYING TO WORK OUT A PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. (I TOLD BOUTROS I THOUGHT THE WORD "LEGAL" HAD BEEN USED BY THE UN, NOT BY ANY US SPOKESMAN. I HAVE SINCE CHECKED OUR FILES AND BELIEVE THAT FALSE IMPRESSION WAS CREATED HERE BY INACCURATE PRESS ACCOUNTS. I WILL SO INFORM BOUTROS.)

3. BOUTROS SAID THAT GOL LEADERS HAD FULL DISCUSSION OF SOUTH LEBANON PROBLEM WITH SIILASVUO ON JUNE 14 AND THAT HE (BOUTROS) THOUGHT UN NOW FULLY UNDERSTOOD GOL'S POSITION. (BOUTROS REMARKED THAT GENERAL ERSKINE WAS SIMPLY NOT SUBTLE ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH POLITICAL MATTERS.) THE UN HAD DECIDED THAT IT WOULD ATTEMPT TO AVOID ANY CONFRONTATION WITH HADDAD, BUT WOULD SHOW AS MUCH STRENGTH AS POSSIBLE IN AREAS WHICH HADDAD DID NOT CONTROL. (WHILE WE WERE MEETING, HOWEVER, BOUTROS WAS HANDED A REPORT FROM ISRAELI RADIO SAYING THAT A CONFRONTATION WAS TAKING PLACE IN SOME CHRISTIAN AREAS BETWEEN UNIFIL FORCES -- WHICH HAD BEEN SENT INTO CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES AFTER AGREEMENT WITH HADDAD AND SHIDIAC -- AND CHRISTIAN

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MILITIAS, SUCH AS THE GUARDIANS OF THE CEDARS, WHO WERE OBJECTING TO THIS UN PRESENCE AND CLAIMING THAT THEY WERE NOT BOUND BY ANY AGREEMENT THAT HADDAD AND SHIDIAC MAY HAVE MADE WITH ERSKINE ON WHICH THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED.) BOUTROS SAID, SPEAKING "OFF THE RECORD," THAT THE GOL HAS NO OBJECTION AND IN FACT EXPECTS THAT UN AND UNIFIL OFFICIALS WILL BE IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH HADDAD ("THREE TIMES A DAY IF THEY WANT") TO WORK OUT A MODUS VIVENDI ON THE GROUND, BUT HE SAID "I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT." BOUTROS SAID HE WOULD NOT OFFICIALLY OBJECT TO SUCH CONTACTS AND NEGOTIATIONS BUT HE COULD NOT SANCTION THEM NOR COULD THE GOL BECOME INVOLVED.

4. BOUTROS SAID THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION IS VERYBAD, VERY CONFUSED AND WORSE THAN BEFORE THE ISRAELI ATTACK. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE, HE SAID, TO BRING HADDAD AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS UNDER CONTROL. UNLESS THE UN FORCES COULD ASSERT THEIR CONTROL OVER THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA GROUPS THEY WOULD HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF CONTROLLING PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION. AT THE SAME TIME, A DIRECT CLASH MUST BE AVOIDED BECAUSE IF ANY OF THE UN FORCES ARE ATTACKED BY THE CHRISTIANS (OR THE PALESTINIANS), THE COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING THE UNIFIL FORCES ARE VERY LIKELY TO WITHDRAW THEM. IF THIS HAPPENED, THE UN AS A FORCE IN

SOUTH LEBANON WOULD BE EMASCULATED AND THE UN'S POTENTIAL TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN AN OVERALL ME PEACE SETTLEMENT WOULD BE GRAVELY COMPROMISED.

5. GIVEN THE PRESENT SITUATION, BOUTROS SAID THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR THE UNITED STATES TO USE ALL OF ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE ISRAELIS TO PERSUADE THEM TO FORCE HADDAD AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, WHO ARE CLEARLY UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL, TO COOPERATE WITH THE UN. I TOLD BOUTROS WE WERE ALREADY MAKING SUCH AN APPROACH TO THE ISRAELIS AND ASKED IF IT WOULD NOT ALSO BE HELPFUL IF SOME LEBANESE ARMY UNITS COULD GO SOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT PATROLS WITH UNIFIL. BOUTROS REPLIED THAT HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE QUESTION OF THE ARMY DEPLOYMENT WITH GENERAL KHOURY

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THIS AFTERNOON, BUT HE FELT THE SITUATION WAS MUCH TOO CONFUSED AT THE MOMENT TO CONSIDER SENDING THE LEBANESE ARMY IN. HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION WITH GENERAL SIILASVUO DURING HIS JUNE 14 VISIT AND SIILASVUO HIMSELF HAD ADVISED THE GOL NOT REPEAT NOT TO SEND THE ARMY AT THIS TIME BUT TO WAIT A LITTLE WHILE UNTIL THE SITUATION WAS CLEARER. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE NEXT ILMAC MEETING, BOUTROS SAID NAQURA WAS ONE OF THE TROUBLE SPOTS AND HE DID NOT KNOW HOW AN OFFICIAL GOL DELEGATION WOULD GET THERE.

6. COMMENT: BOUTROS IS CONVINCED THAT THE KEY TO A VIABLE MODUS VIVENDI IN SOUTH LEBANON IS ISRAELI PRESSURE ON THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO COOPERATE WITH UNIFIL. IN HIS VIEW, ONLY THE UNITED STATES HAS THE NECESSARY INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELIS TO EXERCISE THIS PRESSURE AND UNLESS WE DO SO, BOTH THE CHRISTIANS AND THE PLO WILL OPENLY FLAUNT THE UN'S AUTHORITY, AND THERE WILL EITHER BE ARMED CLASHES INVOLVING UNIFIL FORCES WHICH MAY RESULT IN THE WITHDRAWAL OF THESE TROOPS, OR UNIFIL WILL BECOME SIMPLY UNMO. EITHER RESULT WOULD BE A DEVASTATING BLOW TO UN PRESTIGE, MEAN THE RETURN OF CHAOS TO SOUTH LEBANON, AND PERHAPS ANOTHER ISRAELI INVASION. WE CAN FIND NO FAULT WITH BOUTROS' ANALYSIS. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT THE USG REITERATE AND STRENGTHEN THE INSTRUCTIONS SENT TO EMBASSY TEL AVIV IN STATE 151852 IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN ISRAELI COOPERATION IN THIS EXERCISE.

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